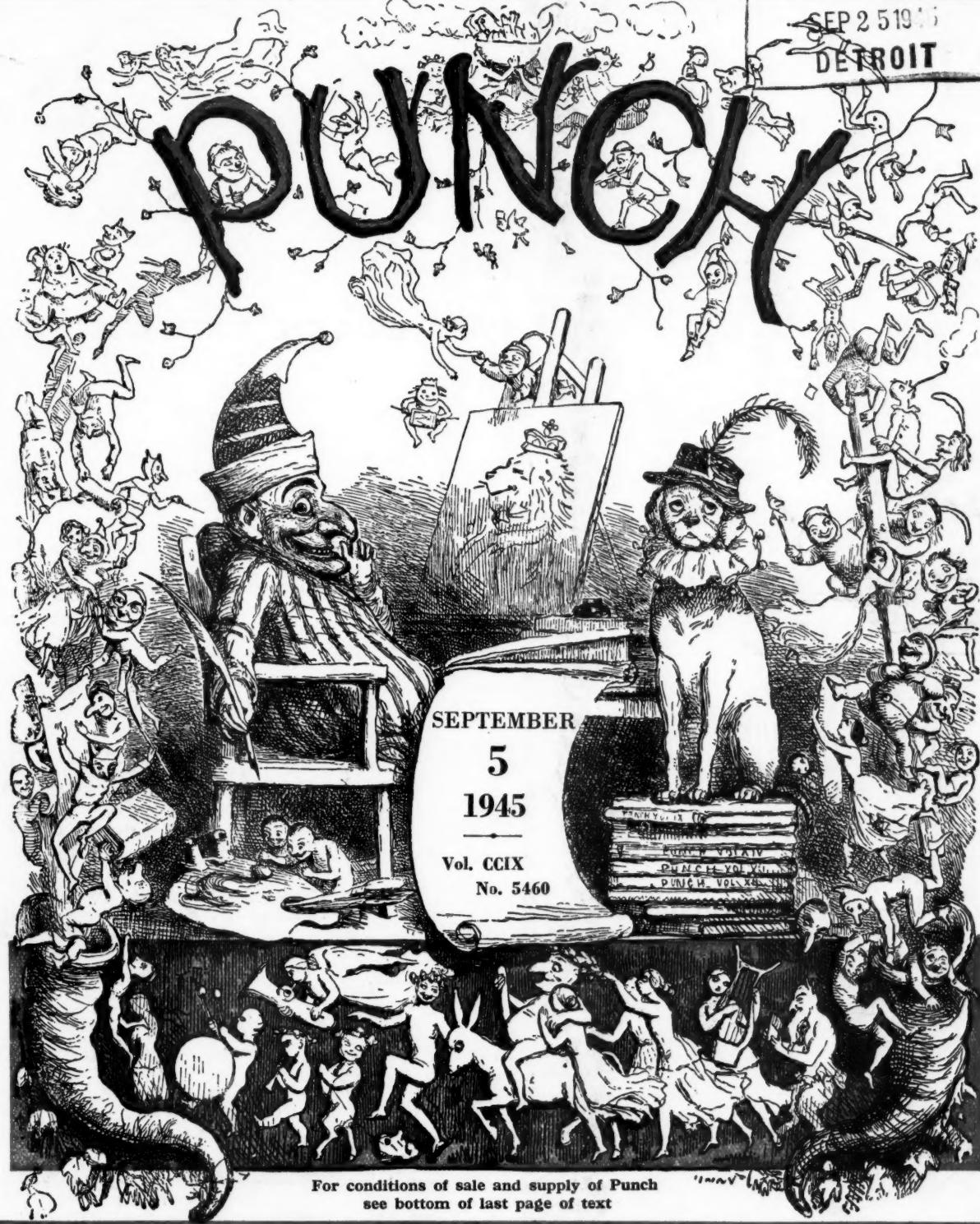


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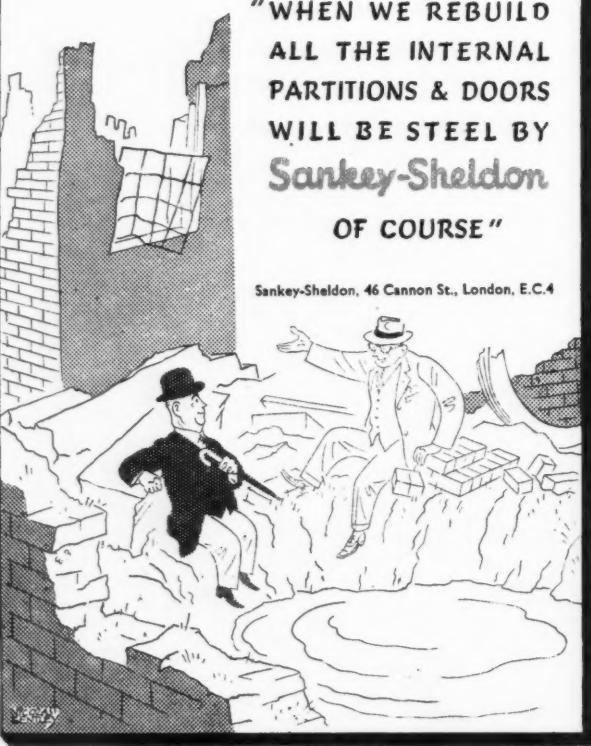
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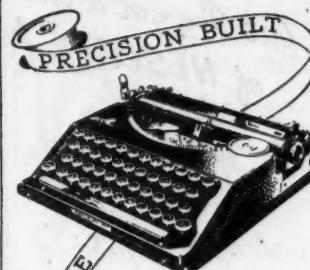


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*A customer writes from Bradford—
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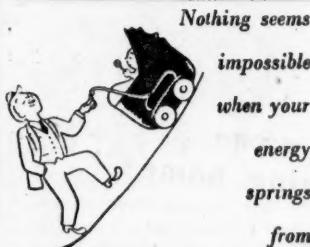


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YOUR DIGESTIVE system is the seat of your powers. Gastric trouble is a prominent factor in premature ageing today. Most of it could be avoided by the simple rules of rest-therapy.

Never eat a full meal when you're tired or worried. Instead, drink a cup of Benger's Food. It soothes the stomach, gives the digestion the rest it needs while you sleep, yet provides your body with full nourishment.

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PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCIX No. 5460

September 5 1945

Charivaria

We rather sympathize with the man who waited patiently in a queue for cigarettes until he reached the head of it only to be told that the Conservative party candidate for the by-election had already been chosen.

Science is now making such strides that liners may soon be crossing the ocean on teaspoonsful of fuel; but it will be interesting to see where science manages to obtain the teaspoons.



Idealists maintain that all nations should share the atomic bomb. Pessimists maintain that they will.

Diamonds are now being exported from London. Duchesses who used to discard them after one use are now too busy scouring the second-hand clothes shops.

It is now revealed that during the Lend-Lease crisis the Government seriously thought of asking for London back.

Disinterested Critics

"Even people who do not know what is in the Treaty clamour for its revision," said one Egyptian. —*Indian paper*.

If anything goes wrong, both parties in the House are in the happy position of being able to unite in blaming the previous Government.

"We are all more or less mechanics," to quote a carpentry journal. At any rate, give most of us a spanner and we'll bid fair to undo the next man's work.

A scientist predicts that man will soon be able to control the weather. How jolly for cricketers to read that play stopped rain!

The Chancellor warns us not to expect Utopia in a hurry. Even if it was just round the corner, some of us would have to clear a lot of forms out of the way to see it.

The prevalence of so many tanned faces in London nowadays is colourful evidence of the number of people who managed to get away for a few days' queueing in the sea air.

Moths, Please Note

"A statement that the new clothing ration will be 'extremely unpalatable' is reported to have been made by Sir Stafford Cripps . . ." —*Sunday paper*.



Evening dress for men is still rare in London. At a social gathering recently a guest in white-tie-and-tails was soon recognized as a policeman on reconnaissance.

There are now seven million income-tax payers in Great Britain. Unemployment can never regain the championship.

A man who became the father of triplets in 1942 has now been presented with twins. The rebate continues.



A trade paper says contemporary architecture is in full flower. But if you visit some of the new estates a day too soon only the stems are visible.

"With care we shall be able to keep warm through the winter," says the Minister of Fuel. After all, the worst of the summer is over.

Thousands of jellyfish were washed up on the beach of a seaside resort, but no holiday-makers were stung. Not that they would have noticed, anyway.

Home Hints

On Moving In

LEAT me lead you up the garden path," I said.
He was a sad-faced man, as I find that foremen often are, and he did not seem to be much impressed by the appearance of the dwelling-place. I knew he was the foreman at once, because he wore a white coat with "Foreman" embroidered on it in red letters. I am always keenly observant of uniforms.

"This is the front door," I said, pointing to it rather proudly.

"A bit narrer, ain't it?"

"We must all do the best we can," I said, "and establish the closest co-operation. Rome," I added thoughtfully, "was not built in a day."

He then examined the stairs.

"It'll be a job getting some of them pieces up them," he observed.

"Orando laborando," I replied.

I found that a large sofa had already been set down on one of the flower-beds. Not for the first time during the process of moving furniture, I noted the difficulty of choosing a suitable place for supervising and commanding the field of operations.

I was about to sit down on the sofa when the members of the team placed across the arms of it what appeared to be a large portion of a book-case. I could of course have carried out my original intention, but this would have involved lying curled up in a cramped position on the sofa, like a man peering out of a ship's bunk, and I decided instead to take up a position in the entrance hall. This again was not a good plan, for every time that a piece of furniture was brought in I was obliged to retire into the clothes cupboard and shut the door on myself.

I went back into the garden again. Some of the "pieces" had labels. Some had not. Some of the labels had come off. So had some of the legs. And some of the casters. I anticipated a certain amount of trouble. It came.

As the foreman had guessed, the staircase had not been constructed for the free passage of persons carrying sofas with them while they mounted it.

"Nothing to do," he said, "but take a window out."

This would not have occurred to me, but I did not care to seem astonished.

"Let a window be removed," I cried.

It was done with incredible speed, and while two men lifted the sofa on

high, two others hauled it into the gaping hole above, over a large piece of sacking. It resembled a burglary in reverse.

"A nice job, my men," I said when it was over. "I think we have every reason to congratulate ourselves."

I lit a cigarette, and stood for some time looking at a hollyhock. Then the foreman came to me again.

"About that book-case," he said. "It won't go into the downstairs room where you've labelled it to go, not when the top's on."

"Why so?" I inquired.

"Room's not high enough."

"Couldn't you lift the ceiling a little?"

This was, apparently, impossible.

"I could put it into one of the top rooms. It's a matter of eight inches higher, but it'll mean having another window out."

"Take out more of the windows," I commanded. "Where there's a will, there's a way."

By this time the house was beginning to present a rather dishevelled appearance. Nevertheless, as all seemed to be proceeding with a swing, I felt that I had earned a few moments of rest. I found a quiet room with a slightly battered arm-chair in the middle of it, and sat down.

Evidently I must have sunk into a sort of doze after my labours, for some time later I sat up with a start in what appeared to be the middle of the night. It took me some time to realize what had happened. The window was entirely concealed. So was the door. Packing-cases were piled to the ceiling on every side of me. There were no sounds of toil any longer, nor any of trampling feet. I was walled in. I had heard of this happening to nuns or, it may be, to criminals, but always, I thought, in a brick or stone building after some crime or sin, and never to a guiltless householder in his own furniture and his own private room. I uttered a loud cry. There was no response. I thought I heard the faint scurrying of a mouse, then all was silent again. There appeared to be no loophole of escape. A thousand thoughts chased each other rapidly through my brain. It then occurred to me that the men had gone away for their midday meal, and it might be hours before I was discovered and rescued.

I shouted again and again.

Then I heard footsteps. They were followed by laboured breathing, and the noise of someone hauling away at one of the upper packing-cases that blocked the door. Light streamed in at last. There was an aperture in the solid wall of wood.

A face appeared, but not the face of a furniture remover; it was the face of a coloured man. A coloured man with a broad smile which disclosed a row of gleaming teeth.

"Who are you?" I cried in alarm. "I come about the chimneys," he said.

He helped me out. It was a romantic scene. Even thus, I thought to myself, did Stanley discover Livingstone. It has been the fashion to make fun of sweeps, but I can only say about this sweep that I have never met a more kindly nor a more competent man. He had summed up the situation at a glance, and saved me with instructive sang-froid from a most unfortunate predicament. In the dining-room he at once began to employ the tools of his trade. Rod after rod went into the fire-place, and soon there was a large pile of soot at his feet.

"This is the worst of them," he said. "I've known her for years, this one."

Any man who can call a chimney "her" commands my respect, like an engine-driver or the captain of a ship.

Rejoicing in my new-found liberty, I went into the garden again and, at the same moment, there began to stream up from the front gate a most peculiar procession. It was headed by the foreman in white, with his colleagues behind him, but there followed also a lady with a mop, dusters, and a pail, and two men carrying small leather bags. It was as though some little town had been emptied of its folk this pious afternoon. The rush of comradeship, the sudden change from darkness and solitary confinement brought tears to my eyes. The lady, who had a remarkable flow of conversation, said she had come to wash down the paint. One of the men announced himself as the electric, the other claimed to be the gas. I told them all of my little contretemps and they were vastly diverted by the tale.

Seldom can there have been a merrier reunion on the ground floor of any house, and it was not long before dust and soap and soot, the ripping of wires, and hammering and loud explosions from the cooker began to



TOUJOURS L'AUDACE

[“We should be courageous enough to apologize to the Chinese. . . .”—*A Japanese general.*]

dispel the previous sense of frustration and solitude. I brought out a case of beer when I had seen all busily engaged on their respective duties.

"Carry on," I said, "with your appointed tasks. I propose to take a little walk to ease the cramp in my limbs."

At the gate I met still one more newcomer.

"What are you?" I said. "The milk?"

"I came to ask if this house was for sale."

"YOU WHAT?"

"I thought perhaps you were moving out."

If I had had an atomic bomb in my pocket (fortunately I had not), I should have killed that man.

* * * * *

When I returned the whole happy community was dissolving. I should not have said that the house was ready for immediate occupation, nor that it was easy to walk about in it, but all the windows had been replaced and I noticed, with pardonable pride, that the roof was still on. Nor do I think that either the lamp-post at the corner, or the nearby wall, or even the vehicle itself has suffered any serious damage from the turning round of the van.

The young tyro who has learned nothing from this little article on the subject of moving into a new house is earnestly recommended to read it through slowly again.

EVOE.



"Must it be Essex, dear? There's a very nice bungalow for sale just outside Chester."

Nomenclature

WHEN 1944 began Ponsonby Purbright was an Acting Paymaster Lieutenant Commander, Royal Navy (A.P.L.C. in the Navy List); he was the Naval Store-keeping Officer (N.S.K.O.) and Second Accountant Officer (A.O.2) and Air Supply Department Officer (A.S.D.O.) in a Fleet carrier (floating flat-top): there were rubber stamps in his office to bear out the facts, and tallies on the doors of cabin and office. From time to time he would receive four copies of the same memorandum from the Commander, and it was not beyond his administrative ability to engineer the necessity for circularizing himself. The ship rocked, the sun shone and if he had a top-secret sorrow at all it was his inability to arrange four butter rations.

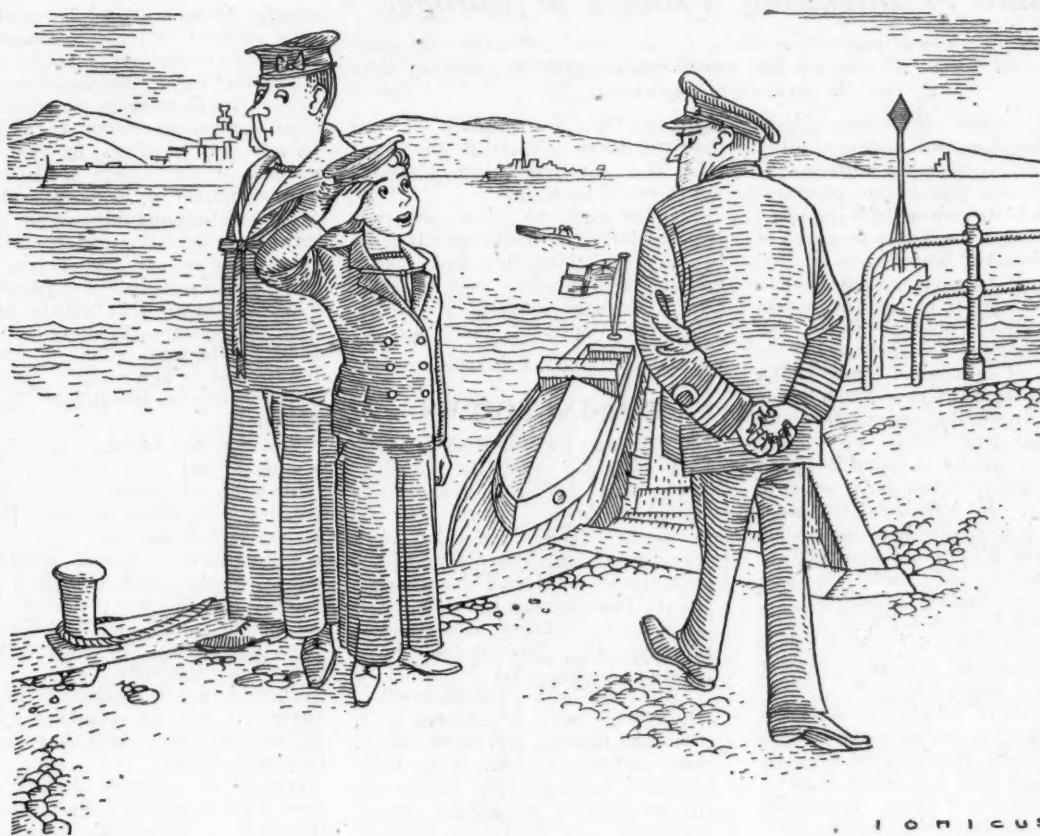
It was still early in the year when the Admiralty first struck at his peace of mind and changed two of his names into one. He was called Naval Store-keeping Officer and Air Supply Department Officer no longer; he was the Accountant Officer (Stores) instead. A.O.(S.).

He was surprised at the sadness he felt at losing the old titles. Nevermore would the names Unsko, Nisko and Asdo be bandied about him. But he pulled himself together and asked the shipwrights to change the tallies on

the doors. These, with a few of the rubber stamps, were altered and the ship sailed on as full of stores as before.

Their Lordships then did it again. They granted him what they called quasi-permanent acting rank. "Ponsonby," they said in effect, "you were only a Paymaster Lieutenant serving in the acting rank of Paymaster Lieutenant Commander, but now we hereby promote you to Quasi-permanent Acting Paymaster Lieutenant Commander." Purbright liked this. It was friendly of the Admiralty because it became less likely he would suddenly be a Lieutenant again and his wife have to pay the income-tax on his Lieutenant Commander's pay out of his allotment to her. (Anyone who does not understand this sentence is advised to join the Navy and see the Pay Office.) What roused him was the word "quasi." He did not like it. He did not know how to pronounce it and became involved in conjecture and uncomfortable discussion. Some said they pronounced it to rhyme with one of the high aces in the phrase "Aces high and queens to follow"; others preferred Mr. Churchill's pronunciation of "Nazi." It was another change, and Purbright moved about the ship apprehensive and moody.

His fear was justified, for their Lordships were now preparing the final blow, the blow that was to provoke him to bitter action. They made their decision one autumn morning in a glade in the forest near the Admiralty. It was a brave scene. The Editor of the Navy List, a picturesque black-and-white job, sat with his back against the trunk of an oak, holding forth. Cross-legged round him sat the Commodores Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth, Devonport, Chatham and Lee-on-Solent, the Commodore Patrol Service Central Depot, Lowestoft, and a small red-haired Commodore called Spindrift. "I hear," he was saying, "that the title of the Accountant Branch is being changed and I should like to place on record my inability, owing to shortage of staff and paper, to alter the Navy List to conform." "Hark at him!" remarked Commodore Spindrift, chewing an acorn. "What's that?" asked a deep voice from behind the tree. The Commodores all said "Good morning, sir," for it was the Lord High Admiral himself. The Editor of the Navy List rose to his elastic-sided feet and explained. "First I'd heard of it," said the Lord High Admiral loudly. "Where's the Paymaster Director



IONICUS

"Unless you require it, may we have the launch for the afternoon, Sir?"

General, if that still happens to be his name?"

The Commodores scattered into the hearts of the oaks as one Commodore. As their searching cries grew fainter, the stems of a nearby rhododendron bush parted and the Paymaster Director-General stepped out. "The idea was," he said, "to call ourselves the Supply Branch, sir. Lieutenants (S.) and Commanders (S.) and so on, like the Lieutenants (E.) and Commanders (E.) in the Engineering Branch." The Editor of the Navy List objected; he pointed out that Paymasters often did secretarial work and that the word "supply" no more fully described the functions than did the words "Paymaster" or "Accountant." It was explained that the full title of the Branch would be "Supply and Secretariat." The Lord High Admiral giggled. "We'll let it pass, but I'd say that secretaries could well be described as Supply Officers," he said. "They

supply my in-tray—" "Mille-memoranda?" asked the Paymaster Director-General. "Exactly," said the Lord High Admiral.

The only Commodore to return was Spindrift. He spat out his acorn and asked what would be done about the Signal Officers who were Lieutenants (S.) already; not to mention, he added with a dreadful oath, the Captains and Admirals (S.) in the submarine service. The Paymaster Director-General's reply was that the signalmen could become Lieutenants (C.) and the submariners Captains and Admirals (S/M). "C' for what?" asked the Lord High Admiral. "Seaforth Highlanders," said Spindrift. This was too much. The Commodore was led away at once by the Editor of the Navy List and drowned round the corner. "C" for "Communications," said the Paymaster Director-General. The Lord High Admiral thought for a moment and made up his mind. "Variety," he

said, "is the spice of life on the ocean waive the difficulties."

A few weeks later Quasi-permanent Acting Lieutenant Commander (S.) Ponsonby Purbright, Royal Navy, Deputy Supply Officer (D.S.O.) and Supply Officer (Stores) (S.O.(S.)), sat wild-eyed in his cabin, rocking with the ship, twisting hot bare toes together and writing purposefully. "Sir," he wrote, "I have the honour to request that I may be allowed to change my name by deed-poll . . ."

• •

Impending Apology.

"Why is the wireless in the Naafi always kept behind the counter? My friends all say the same. You get a big programme with 8 pages, but you have to have what the manager tunes into. It seems that its not what you want but what he wants.

The other day I wanted to hear Vera Lynn but I had to listen to some music."

Letter in "Naafi Ensa News."

Guide to Intending Visitors to Europe

(In view of the return of peace the minds of many readers will be turning again to Continental travel. Our experts have accordingly compiled the following notes for the guidance of any such.)

TH E wines of Europe have suffered as much displacement as have the peoples, without the benefit of any repatriation organization, each bottle normally being liberated where found. Those in search of French wines and brandies are advised to travel in Germany, while Italian wines are known to be concentrated in Austria. Beer is not to be found anywhere, although each district has its own form of substitute. Only vodka exists in those districts in which it was formerly drunk, but access to those areas is rather difficult.

Food can usually be found in places to which you yourself have actually brought it. In default of any such foresight, it is advisable to wear some form of clothing resembling a military uniform and to walk boldly into any establishment marked "Mess," "Club," "Leave Hotel," N.A.A.F.I. or Detention Barracks. Special national food can sometimes be obtained in most areas. It is called "Spam."

Trains full of people can often be seen standing on railway lines in the remoter country districts, but it is not known where they have come from or are going to, if anywhere. It may be that they are local attempts to solve the housing problem. If you do find yourself in a moving train and are asked for a ticket, say indignantly, "Do Russian soldiers have to pay?"*

When travelling by car it is advisable to paint the vehicle a shade of khaki or green, stencil on the panels a number of five-pointed stars (in white or red, according to taste) and a serial number of not less than eight figures. Any number with less than eight digits will not appear authentic. Do not park your car in a populated area, still less in the open country. If a car must be left, it is advisable to remove all wheels and chain the chassis to a solidly constructed building. To secure it to a wooden one is worse than useless.

Petrol is obtainable free of charge at any military establishment by anyone behaving like a high-ranking officer.

Access to a tramcar can only be obtained in the small hours of the

*The actual nationality referred to should be varied in accordance with the occupation zone in which the visitor is travelling. For example, in a French zone say, "Do American soldiers have to pay?"

night and then at a terminus. If you desire to leave a tram at any point other than a terminus it is advisable not to travel by tram.

No passports or visas are now required but it is doubtless advisable to carry something that looks like a military identification card in some foreign language (preferably Allied).

On the Continent there are no

CLOSING DOWN

NOW that the war with Japan is finally won, Mr. Punch feels that he can close his Comforts Fund.

He has therefore decided to close his Fund, and divide any balance in hand and donations in the post equally between the Incorporated Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Help Society, and the Missions to Seamen.

He thanks with all his heart all those who have contributed in cash and in kind, and those who have helped in other ways to enable him to provide comforts for so many of our gallant men and women in the Forces, those serving in the Forces of our Allies, the "blitzed" families, and the refugees from concentration and slave labour camps.

Although Mr. Punch has had many letters of gratitude and thanks, he feels that these are due to you for your generosity, sympathy and unfailing support through these trying years.

WELL DONE!

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

queues. Either you know the shopkeeper or you do not. In any case all Continental people, particularly housewives, have had training of a kind which was subsequently known as "Assault Training" in this country.

Currency problems are now almost non-existent. There are three forms of currency universally acceptable:

- (a) Cigarettes
- (b) Chocolate
- (c) Soap.

The following things can be obtained in any restaurant anywhere, viz., hot

water and warm water. The hot water is known as café and the warm water as tea. There is little difference in the price charged for either commodity.

Cafés form the best centre for selling any actual coffee you may have been astute enough to bring with you. The most convenient centre at which to initiate any dealings in the black market in any other goods is the nearest branch of the local bank.

Most restaurants have dance bands, generally consisting of a team of elderly ladies. If you reveal your nationality you will be allowed to select the music that will be played from a repertoire consisting of "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Sonny Boy" and "Tipperary" (generally considered to be the British National Anthem).

Cinemas are usually open in the afternoon and early evening. They provide an admirable opportunity to see those films which you missed in the earlier days of the war.

In the event of your wishing to attract a large crowd of children in the shortest possible time (for what reason we cannot possibly imagine) it is only necessary to say the words "Gum-Chum" in a low voice.

There is no fraternization in Germany. If you see a soldier with a girl you may be certain that she is a Displaced Person.

One thing has not changed. On your return you will find that the British Customs officials behave precisely as they did before the war.

Home Chat

"WHY did you have all these photographs taken, daddy?"
"We wanted to remember each other, Peter."

"Who is this, then?"
"Well, I just can't remember his name off-hand."
"Will you be able to remember it to-morrow?"

"I doubt if I ever knew it. He was just some fellow who . . ."

"You have just happened to pick on the one person, out of all the groups, Peter, that daddy does not remember."

"I bet mummy told you to pick that one on purpose."

"Not at all, darling. We are both intensely interested."

"Who was this one, daddy?"
"He was quite the most offensive ass it was my lot to meet during the whole of my service, and his name was Bickenthorp."

"Weren't you the C.O.?"

"Yes, Peter."

"Then why did you have him, if you didn't like him?"

"Because C.O.s are not allowed to choose their own officers."

"What Peter means is that although you didn't choose your own officers, you could have ordered him not to appear in the picture, darling; and I rather agree with him."

"My dear girl, a C.O. has something better to do than to supervise the seating for a mess photograph."

"Who does supervise it?"

"The P.M.C."

"Is he more important than the C.O.?"

"No, he is not."

"Well, I don't know, darling. I remember you having to ask one if you could have a bottle of whisky, and I never heard you so absolutely unctuous to anybody in your life. You positively grovelled."

"Nothing of the kind. But because you are C.O. it does not mean you are entitled to walk off with all the mess whisky."

"Then why did you ask him . . ."

"Show me the photograph of the P.M.C., daddy."

"What Peter is probably thinking, darling, is that you had all these groups taken to remember people, and now it turns out that half of them are people you can't remember even with the help of the photograph, and the others are people you particularly want to forget, like Bickenthorp."

"Who are these, daddy?"

"Oh, a football team."

"Did you play?"

"Of course not."

"Then why are you in it?"

"Because he was C.O., darling."

"Why do you sit in the middle?"

"Because I should look extremely silly sitting at one end."

"Why would you, darling?"

"Because for one thing the group wouldn't balance, considering everyone else is in footer kit."

"This man isn't."

"He is the linesman."

"He is in uniform. And at one end. Wouldn't it have balanced better if you had stood the other end?"

"Don't be silly, darling, he is one of the storemen."

"Couldn't you have sat down cross-legged in front, daddy?"

"No, I could not."

"Why, darling? Would you have creaked?"

"I was requested to sit in the middle, and so I sat in the middle; if you are not satisfied with the design . . ."

"What are the names of the men, daddy?"

"Now how on earth should I know that, after two years?"

"They were your own men, darling, and you idolized them."

"This one was the goalkeeper."

"I can see that."

"Did you idolize him, daddy?"

"No, as a matter of fact I gave him fourteen days' detention."

"What was his name?"

"Sims, I think. Or Henriques, or something. Clark? No, Clark was a sergeant. And he was centre forward. It may have been Withers."

"Would you know them all again if you saw them?"

"I don't suppose I would . . . in civvies."

"Couldn't you carry the photograph about with you, and pull it out if you were doubtful about people?"

"Well, really, Peter, look at the size of it."

"You could fold it up."

"And carry it in my hat, I suppose."

"Can we throw these away, then, daddy?"

"Certainly not. Good heavens, that lot won the Cup."

"But you can't remember them."

"That has nothing to do with it. It was my battalion, and they won, and I want it, and I am going to hang it in the hall. Put it back, Peter, at once."

"What group is this?"

"Just people talking."

"Who are they?"

"It was taken on Sports Day, when we were at Ashmoreton."

"Why have they all got their backs turned?"

"Because the person who took the photograph was hiding behind them."

"Why didn't the person go round to the front?"

"Because if the person had, we should have walked away. Look, that is the general, and that is Staff-Captain A.; and this is me."

"It was in August 1939, darling. It was the first time I had seen you in uniform."

"And the second time you had seen me at all."

"Why are they looking away, mummy?"

"Daddy was looking away, darling, because he knew the photograph was being taken; and he made everyone else look away to pretend he didn't know."

"Who took it, then?"

"Mummy did."

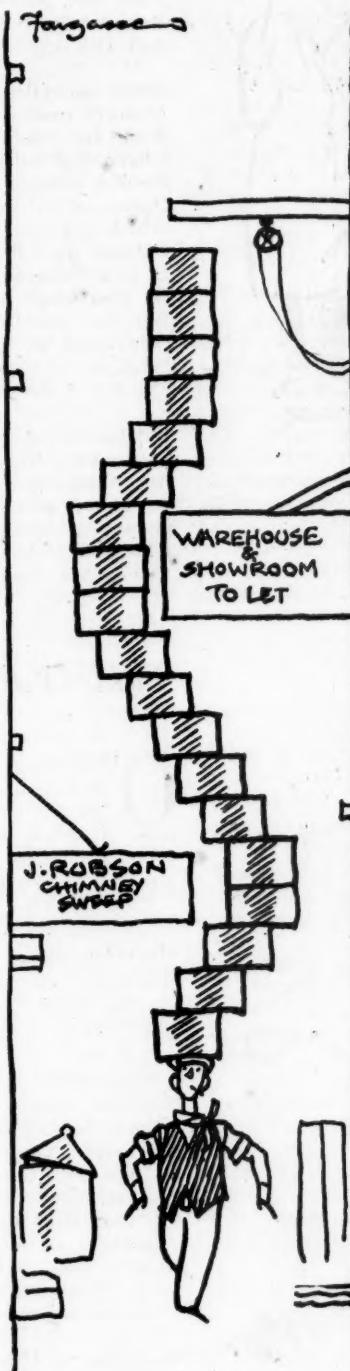
"Can we throw it away now?"

"I should think so."

"Most certainly not, darling. How dare you! Give it to me at once. It's the only one in the whole collection that has ever been worth keeping."

"That's very sweet of you, darling."

"Well, in those days you didn't have a tummy."





"There—it wasn't so very terrible after all, was it?"

Reunion

PATIENCE, old friend!
The long night is all but through.
Those cads over the water
Whose activities have kept you furled
And made me the sport of the elements
Have had it.
Free, my umbrella, free!

Thanking me kindly for my services
And leaving, I understand, a small *pourboire* on the mantel-
piece
The Air Council is about to shake me sadly by the hand,
Having no doubt first asked me for my cape, anti-gas,
And for my pistol, automatic, anti-Axis.
I shall be invited to bare my torso
For its ultimate inspection by a heavy-breathing stranger,
And when I have lent my support
To the official Use-More-Paper campaign
By putting my name to a mountain of forms in spifflicate
I shall then be let loose to browse in an acre of jackets,
semi-hacking, tweed, Mk. II.
Shortly afterwards,
Much fogged,
I shall be free.

Free, my umbrella, free!
Free of the wet man's burden, coat and macintosh.
Free to swing you prop-wise as I walk.
Free to lean idly on your well-tempered tip
And cast about for an Air Marshal
To kiss my hand to!

Unleashed, old gamp!
You must be waiting in a hackney cab

So we can go hand-in-handle off to lunch,
Seeking a five-star pothouse where the lobs are fresh
And where, on hooks of gold,
In sober dignity
May swing a gentleman's umbrella.
There I shall pre-empt a flagon,
Of an octane suited to brolification,
And, while a maestro gets busy at the chafing-dish,
Toast you, glad symbol of liberty,
Respectfully, but with warmth and joy.
And with depth.

Often, umbrella,
A lonely pawn out on drenched tarmac,
While the English summer wept chronic, chilling tears,
I have deplored the bias,
For it is nothing else,
Harboured in high-up military breasts
Which has kept us two divorced.
I should have liked to mark my small promotions
In proud blue circles
On your ample silken stomach.
But that was frowned upon.
Calvin and the Puritan Hangover are much to blame.
What is uncomfortable must be right.
The wetter the smarter.

But take heart, old prop and screen,
In the dark cupboard where you stand loyally waiting!
Any minute now we are together.
A wet and splendid future lies ahead.
Moreover, I know a man who controls rubber.
I have asked him to dinner,
And he has promised to give us a ring.

ERIC.

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XVIII

ONCE allow Amos to get within digressing distance of the subject of Accent and you are doomed to hear it discussed for a considerable time: it is a topic of endless fascination for him. What he likes most is to consider the effect of a particular accent on an ear not prepared to receive it.

"The Southern Englishman naturally thinks he is overhearing a hint to some Manchester business man," he observed recently, "when the words 'Buy yarn, Barney Banks' fall upon his ear; whereas he is actually listening to an American declaiming the first line of 'Loch Lomond.'"

* * * * *

"And talking of yarn," he added on this occasion, "the Southern Englishman is naturally a little astonished when he hears an American in a restaurant ask the waiter for 'flaming yarn' . . ."

Amos paused and looked round, and then went on: ". . . until he realizes that the American is merely demanding a steak, in French."

Some of us didn't get this. Luckily he made it clear when he went on to discuss the fact that Americans when using French words tend to make a better shot at the emphasis, and a worse one at the accent, than the English. "We say 'caffé,'" he pointed out, "and they say 'cafay'; we, if we say it at all, say 'filet mi-gnon' and they say 'flaming yarn'."



"Right. Now if you'd all very kindly step over to where I'm standing . . ."

"And we both get Spam—ha! ha! haha! heh! ha! hahaha!" said a stout jolly-looking man (I never discovered his name), who appeared to think he had made some sort of joke.

Amos's eyes rested on him broodingly and at last he inquired "Do you ever discover poison in your drink?"

The stout man, continuing to chuckle, negligently replied "What? No. No, of course not."

Amos observed "Ah, well, there are new experiences in store for all of us."

* * * * *

One of his most exasperating characteristics (hard as it is to choose between them) is his habit of never appearing to consider himself wrong. He will retrieve a debating point, or a verbal victory, from utter and obvious defeat.

Some time ago somebody asked him casually "How do you spell 'sulphanilamide'?"

Amos was beginning "S-U-L-P-H-O—" when the other man, still quite casually, chipped in "Wrong."

We didn't see any way out of this, but Amos did. "I'm not wrong!" he cried in a passion. "Do you or do you not believe your ears? You asked how I spelt it, and that's how I do spell it!"

* * * * *

"Nothing exceeds the egotism of detectives," said Amos. Having delivered himself of this pronouncement he pondered for a time and then went on "It is only by allowing them to be complete egotists of course that their authors enable them ever to solve anything. But it cannot fail to irritate us—er—"

"Other egotists—"

"—when," said Amos, not looking at the interrupter, "for instance, the detective reads some sinister meaning

into a man's unwillingness to jump out of bed and catch the midnight train for Wolverhampton so that his piece of evidence can be compared with someone else's."

He sat back and made the elbowing movements that usually precede one of his small dramatic scenes. Then he assumed a frown, put the bottom of an empty beer-glass to his ear, and seemed to be listening. "H'm," he said, nodding, "h'm. Good-bye." He put the glass down as if hanging up a receiver, made a great show of thinking deeply, and at last said (in italics): "*X had not sounded enthusiastic. What could he be concealing?*"

Here he relaxed to show that he had come off the stage, and growled and puffed for some moments.

"Enthusiastic!" he repeated at length. "What need the unfortunate X have been 'concealing' except ferocious annoyance at being plagued in the middle of the night by a fool detective?"

The effect of this outburst was only slightly marred by the fact that throughout it he was wiping his ear.

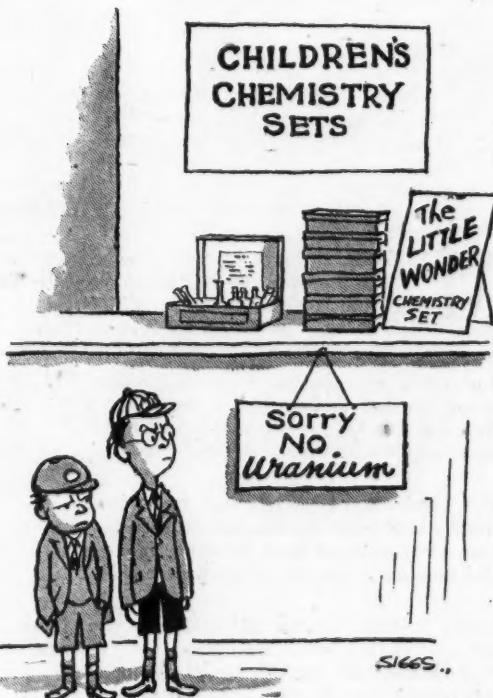
* * * * *

When it became known that some short work of Amos's had been plagiarized, successfully (I mean the plagiarist had got his money and disappeared), we were all sympathetic—we knew that this sort of thing would upset Amos very much—but we hesitated to say so. One man summed up the general attitude, before Amos arrived, by saying "One's heart goes out to him . . . gingerly."

How right we were appeared later when the barmaid, having grasped the fact that something had been copied, observed cheerfully "Well—imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

"So," Amos immediately snarled, "you see me as the sort of character that thinks flattery worth having, do you?"

R. M.





"JUST like them to go and spoil the amenities with a block of flats."

Address to Science

MAJESTIC Science, by whose awful wits
The Atom—and the Earth—may fall to bits,
Seek out, before I am too old to care
Some simple scheme by which to keep my hair.

Most noble wizards, monarchs of the sky,
Seeing through darkness with the Magic Eye,
Back to your labs again, and let there be
Some way for motorists to notice me.

High Chairs and Faculties that we endow,
From whom poor Nature has no secrets now,
Turn for a moment from the search for gold
And find some answer to my winter cold.

Brains that can change all matter as you choose,
Gas into liquids, solids into booze,
Pray fashion beer enough for all the men,
And let the pubs be open now and then.

You who can do what man has never done,
Split the unsplittable, outshine the sun,
Shatter the queues that stretch along the street,
And let my madam get a bit of meat.

You who can blast a hundred cities down,
Show me some way of getting out of town:
You who can reach the heavens with a ray,
Stand by to light my fire on Christmas Day.

You who have made—or so the people yell—
Nonsense of armies, and the Fleet as well;
You who can slay before the foe can strike,
Get me a taxi, for the love of Mike!

And there are other small but sticky tasks
For which the weary European asks.
But I would add—unlike some other chaps—
Thank you for finishing the filthy Japs. A. P. H.



THE OLD CUSTOMER

"Looks like they'll need a bit of money before I can deal here again."

Military Manœuvres

THEY were floating, somewhere between the roaring mainstream of military life and the tranquil backwaters of the about-to-be-demobilized.

"You may have noticed," observed the staff captain, "that all Army officers are caricatured with the exception of brigadiers."

"I haven't," said William.

"I'm glad," said the staff captain. "You kids notice too much as it is. However, in books subalterns are young, cheeky and hearty; majors fierce and horsey; colonels majestic and awe-inspiring; generals purple and apoplectic. Anything about brigadiers?"

"Nothing," said William.

"Exactly," said the staff captain. "Too elusive. Out of the regiment, not quite in the big stuff. They're the trickiest of the lot to deal with—take you months to learn, my lad. Chuck over that Salvage file."

"What about Bloodstone?" said William. "He looks purple enough."

"Gazetted major-general last Tuesday. See what I mean?"

"Well . . . old Tangle then, over at Bicester?"

"Colonel again. Didn't last—not brigadierial enough. In to-day's orders. Why haven't you read them?"

The telephone rang. "Speaking," said the staff captain. He put his hand over the mouthpiece and winked. "The Brig wants me. Study my approach."

"Yes, sir," said the perfect staff captain. "Quite, sir . . . Indeed, sir? Frightfully good idea, sir; they'll love it. Oh, yes, sir, good for the officers too . . . yes, sir, great fun . . . oh, certainly, sir . . . good-bye, sir."

He smacked down the phone. "Hell!" he said. "Bang goes my golf. Another ruddy treasure hunt on Sunday." He cursed feebly.

"Good fun, treasure hunts," said William.

"You don't know the Brig's hunts," snorted the staff captain. "The perishing men know that if they want to get the officers a rocket all they've got to do is slouch in front of the Brig with a long face when they're supposed to be grinning from ear to ear with merriment. The Brig's hot on morale through entertainment run by the officers. My predecessor lost his job because he yawned at a spelling bee. Brig was question-master. You better watch your step on Sunday."

"Me?" said William.

"You," said the staff captain. "You're running it. I've got to make you into a staff officer, haven't I? Right. Start with the treasure hunt. Clues written in verse. Take 'em in to the Brig at noon. And see that the damn things rhyme."

"Awfully good idea, verses," said the brigadier. "Kind of literary. Thought of it in my bath."

"Yes, sir," said William.

"As a matter of fact," went on the brigadier in a tone which was meant to sound casual, "I've—er—scribbled a few myself." He thrust a piece of paper into William's hands. "Don't suppose they're of the slightest use." He stared defiantly out of the window.

"Towser lives here, I'll be bound; I think I'd better look around," read William, and wondered how long he was supposed to take. He counted a minute under his breath.

"I'm going to take a flying leap, sir," he said. "It's the dog kennel in the yard."

The brigadier looked peevish. "You oughtn't to guess," he said. "The

thing's meant to be *worked out*. Go on to the next, and this time work it out."

"If I'm neglected, by and by You'll feed in cold and say 'Oh, my!'"

William feigned concentration and silently counted four hundred. "The fireplace in the dining-hut, sir."

The Brig gave an ecstatic snort. "Correct," he said, "perfectly correct! You took four minutes seven seconds. The men will take five minutes—they haven't your education, I mean. And I'm sure they'll take the same time with the dog one. You guessed. You admitted it."

"Could we have a few more?" asked William.

"Well," said the brigadier, looking at his finger nails—"well, if you insist. But of course I can't promise. You can't churn poetry out, can you?—I mean not just *churn* it out. Got to be in the mood for that sort of thing."

"Yes, sir. Creative mood."

"By Jove!" The brigadier sat up in his chair. "That's absolutely it. Creative mood!"

"I write a bit of poetry," said William diffidently. "I find a rhyming dictionary very handy—"

"Rhyming dictionary!" said the brigadier. "Well, do you now! By George, you may not believe it, but I didn't use a damn thing for those verses. Not a damn thing!" he amplified.

When the brigadier finally opened the door William could see the staff captain hovering around the end of the corridor with a bunch of files.

"Right-o, sir," said William; "then I can leave the rest to you?"

"Well, if you insist," said the brigadier. "But I can't promise you. Got to be in the creative mood, you know. Well, er—thanks very much old boy." He patted William's shoulder and disappeared into his room.

The staff captain waited for the door to shut. "Where the hell have you been all this time?" he hissed. "And since when has he been old-boying you? And what's all this about creating?"

"If you're not careful," said William, "I'll have your job by the end of the week. You can't write a line of verse, let alone a rhyming couplet."

"Huh!" grunted the staff captain. "Esthete stuff, eh? Well, neither can the Brig!"

"No," said William. "But then he doesn't know it."



"Many more helpers are urgently required—if only two or three, or even one!"

Molly Millar's Lane

NEAR where I dwell—precisely
where
Is neither here, just now, or
there—
You'd find a rustic thoroughfare
Called Molly Millar's Lane,
And who that Molly may have been
And when her presence graced the scene
Inquiry, though prolonged and keen,
Has failed to ascertain.

But as I walk that quiet way,
My custom oft at close of day,
I let my wandering fancies play
(Having a poet's mind)
Round two solutions, only two,
The choice of which I leave to you;
Either alternative will do
Just as you feel inclined.

I think of Molly, once the pride
And joy of all the countryside,
Crowned with her sunny hair, blue-eyed,
Radiant in youthful bloom,

I see her standing slim and straight
At twilight by her cottage gate—
Sweet Molly Millar, does she wait?
And if she does, for whom?

Full many a rural swain, I wot,
Was drawn to that romantic spot;
Like flies about the honeypot
From near and far they came,
The rumour spread for many a
mile
Till in the sunshine of her smile
That placid lane assumed the style
Of Molly's pretty name.

Such is the dream I love to nurse
And briefly turn to the reverse:
A witch, complete with cat and
curse,
An eldritch bag of bones

Wise in malignant cantrip how
To do for Farmer Wilkins' cow
And spiflicate the teeming sow
Endeared to Farmer Jones.

And she could cast a subtle spell
That made the stoutest feel unwell
And here, where she was wont to
dwell

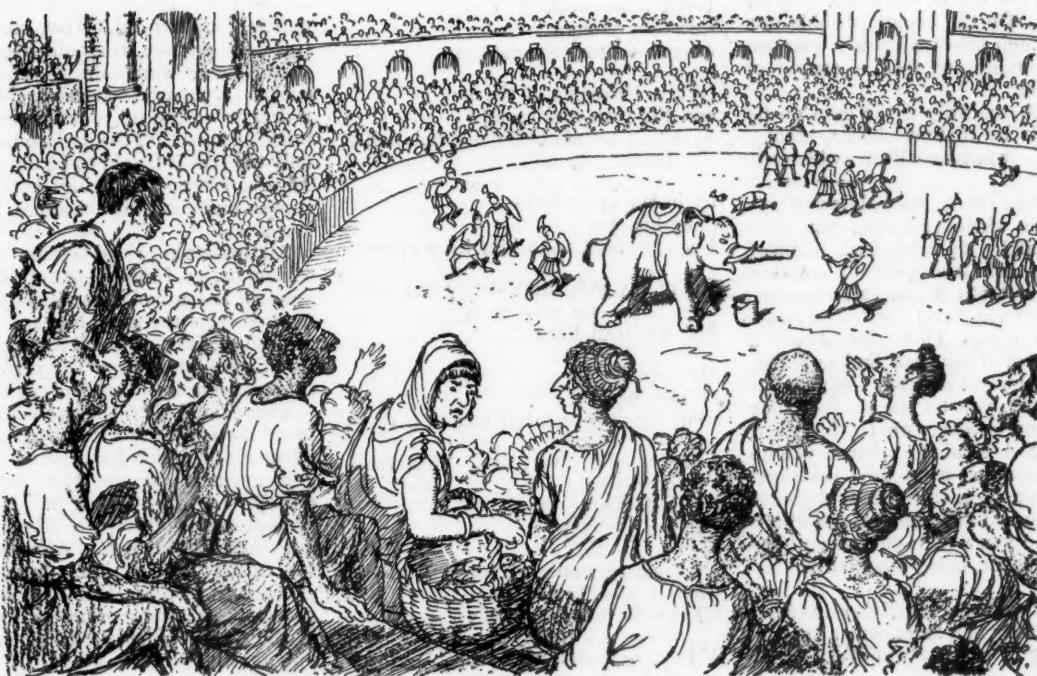
Men moved with furtive pace
Until that lonely path became
Endowed with her unhallowed name
And some suppose her evil fame
Still broods upon the place.

It may be that. Yet, on the whole,
As down that lane at eve I stroll
I feel in my poetic soul
Nothing of witchcraft there,
For me young Molly, calm, sedate,
Shall ever linger by her gate:
O grave-eyed Molly, slim and straight,
The sun is in your hair.

DUM-DUM.

Vive le Sport!

"Wanted to buy 9 m.m. Mauser cartridges
and a tame gazelle."—Advertisement in *East African Standard*.



"I didn't mean to come to the circus at all this afternoon. I thought I was in a queue for bread."

Helping the Harvest Home

YOU may have looked, from the security of the corridor, on the harvest fields. As a regular observer no doubt you have noticed little machines working their way round and round until the golden corn disappears and countless little bundles lie on the ground instead. Some hours (or days) later your neighbour may have drawn your attention to the bundles which are now standing upright in heaps in regular (or irregular) rows. Possibly, leaning comfortably on the rail, you have never given a thought to the worker with hand and brain who makes the countryside look so neat.

I didn't before I caught the special omnibus.

I was having a V Day of my own and went to the bus station to join the queue. Presently I was compressed into a most unusual bus. When it was full it started off, passed all the regular stopping places and, miles from anywhere, the conductor, who I now believe was an official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in disguise, said "Ten for Buttercup Farm." I was decanted with nine others and with them was herded to a gate which opened in to one of the larger English counties. On the county stubble was lying enough wheat, all ready wrapped up in bundles, to feed a couple of continents.

Our job was to put the corn on its feet again by making shocks, stooks, hiles or whatyoucall'em whereveryouare.

To make a shock, stook, hile or whatyoucall'em whereveryouare, you pick up a sheaf by its waist, tuck it under the right arm and pick up another (with your teeth if you can't manage any other way) and tuck *that* under your left arm. Then you choose a vacant spot if you can find one and, standing upright or, after the first few hours, bent, you let the sheaves slide down your forearms on to their feet, bashing their heads together as you do so. After about a hundred have had a slide you bash their heads together with more and more energy and at the same time you notice your arms have changed colour, being now red like the sheaves.

At first your shocks fall down as soon as you turn your back, but after the first forty or so they will stand up in spite of you.

At intervals I tried to remember what I was doing in a former existence

and asked the man working up the next rows. Unfortunately he couldn't stop and I had to go on trying to catch up with him.

* * * * *

I am still going on. You may have seen me through the corridor window. I'm the one on the extreme right. No, that beautiful regular row is *not* mine, it belongs to the worker on the next rows.

Did I hear you say you were going to leave your grandstand and enter the field?

What a shock!

o o

North-Country Tale

ON Starveall Farm bad luck let loose what they call a Poltergoose.

Cunning and greedy,
secret, sly,
he milked the cows in my pasture dry.

He had both mischief
and time to burn—
he put a spell on t' butter-churn.

Night after night he rode t' owd mare
till her eyes were glazed
and her ribs were spare.

Week after week
this plaguy chap
interrupted my Sunday nap

(When I dreams of the hay
and the corn and roots)
by clumping about in my hob-nailed
boots

up in the apple-loft—
dang his eyes!—
I never could take him by surprise.

Em'ly, my wife, kind, sleepy and calm,
says "Joe—we mun shift
fro' Starveall Farm."

My wife Em'ly
on moving-day
went by train, while I loaded t' dray.

I harnessed t' owd mare. "Starveall,
good-bye!
Good riddance, an' all.
Coom oop!" says I.

I'd gone two mile, or happen three
when I met Tom Green.
"Tha's flittin'?" says he.

T' butter-churn bumped on t' big brass
bed:
"Aye, lad—we's flittin'!"
t' Poltergoose said. R. C. S.

And Now for the Ashes

THE train from Manchester was bounding across the rich plain of the Midlands. Standing snugly in a corner of the corridor I asked myself over and over again what lessons could be learned from the series of unofficial or Victory Tests played in England during this momentous* summer. I cannot claim to have studied every ball bowled in the five matches but I have taken a number of representative samples and my views are just about as scientific, I think, as is immediately necessary.

The next series, the Security Council permitting, will be played in Australia. And next time, remember, the Ashes—the real Ashes, that is, not some synthetic substitute—will be at stake. We cricketers have had our Munich. Now is the time to prepare the blueprints of successful reconstruction. Planning—oh, can't you see the need for it, friends?

Here are some facts. This year's matches were remarkable for their low scores. The highest individual score was 118. Four of the five matches were completed in three days. For all this we have to thank "natural" wickets. Now in a manner of speaking all wickets, except those made of matting, are natural. They consist of turf—an organic compound of soil, grass, weeds and worms. But if a wicket is prepared too thoroughly, if it is drained so carefully, cut so close and rolled so hard that the surface becomes only too true it is said to be unnatural. Then a batsman's innings becomes a career and bowling becomes forced labour.

All this has been said before—though seldom better, I think—but of remedial action it has provoked practically none. Groundsmen are only human. They are the victims, as much as any of us, of this senseless urge for perfection. Economics are at the root of the matter.

Two solutions to the problem commend themselves. First, after making adequate provision for their retraining and eventual reabsorption into industry, we might sack all existing groundsmen and replace them with unenthusiastic amateurs. Alternatively we might deprive the professional groundsman of his tools, his rollers, covers, weeding machines and so on. Without his roller he is practically impotent.

* Quite unintentional — good, though, don't you think?



"Oh, what a darling little putter!"

The M.C.C. should establish a new set of rules about wickets. A basic standard of twenty-five to thirty worms to the cubic foot should be made obligatory; and umpires should be empowered to scatter a prescribed quantity of grit and small pebbles before the start of each innings. There should also be provision made for leather-jackets.

The laws of cricket, manifold though they be, are still inadequate under the heading "A batsman is out . . ." In other words, and in spite of this year's resuscitation of the decision "Out—handled the ball," the ways in which an orthodox batsman can be dismissed are still distressingly few. In their pre-war agony bowlers used to suggest all kinds of innovations. Some wanted verdicts in their favour when the batsman

- (1) failed to meet the outgoing batsman at the gate.
- (2) failed to meet the outgoing bowler's needs in the bar.
- (3) failed to score off a no-ball.
- (4) jerked his head out of the way of a rising ball.

(5) put his pads behind his bat in such a position that had the ball—whether it pitched on or off the wicket or not at all—missed the former and hit the latter the umpire would have been unsighted by the bowler and the batsman given the opportunity to commit any number of offences.

—and many, many others, varying from county to county and village to village.

Personally I should pin my hopes for the future on a new multilateral interpretation of the term "obstruction." This summer I have experimented with appeals in this category and have enjoyed a certain amount of success. Try a sudden "Owzat?" or "How would that be?" (according to umpire) at odd moments during the game—preferably while the ball is motionless. There are umpires who react favourably, anxious to prove their knowledge of the game's finer points and perhaps their wakefulness.

A week or so ago I appealed violently from cover-point while a sight-screen

was being moved. The umpire shot a quick look at me.

"I see what you're after," he said, "but you're just a little too previous." I let him see that I was disappointed.

Four balls later, while the batsmen were running a sharp single, I appealed again. There was no mistake this time. As the outgoing batsman was outgoing I strolled over to the umpire and congratulated him on his powers of perception.

"You're a sharp'un, sir, you are," he said, "an' no mistake."

See what I mean?

HOD.

• • •
"Mr. T—— was born in Victoria and immediately entered the engineering profession."—Vancouver paper.

Little rascal!

• • •
"Beginning life at the age of twelve at Liphook, Hants, he was the eldest of five . . ." Local paper.

Well, if the others had to start from scratch . . .

At the Play

"SIGH NO MORE" (PICCADILLY)

VE Day, VJ—and now, pat on its cue, *Sigh No More*, first blossoming of the post-war period in the theatre. Mr. NOEL COWARD is trying to convert our sounds of woe into Hey nonny nonny, and certainly he is seldom dull. As author, composer, and director he continues to believe in a high polish. This revue, worked up to the glossiest sheen, should be many people's delight on a shining night for months and months to come.

Even so, we may sigh at times for the younger COWARD of the Cochran revues. The maestro was more exciting in his earlier days; here he rarely startles. It is good entertainment, swift and mirror-smooth; yet, once it is over, little lingers clearly in the mind except the name-song, the comic intensity of Mr. CYRIL RITCHARD, and the tones of Miss JOYCE GRENFELL, some of whose material is her own. Still, complaint may be churlish. The revue achieves its purpose: while it lasts we do not question it. Though we may feel that COWARD has not added substantially to our knowledge of his work, we can salute him for having again brought off the theatrical trick and dazzled us for an hour or two with typical gloss-and-glitter.

Collectors who wish to see how loosely the word "revue" can be interpreted should pass from the Piccadilly to the other end of London's theatre-country. While Nervo and Knox and their accomplices at the Stoll (discussed here last week) believe that a revue should be a rumbunctious business, at once slap-up and knock-down, Mr. COWARD's version is altogether more mannered and sophisticated. Oddly, in *Sigh No More* the most elaborate joke is also the most obvious: the pageant with its archly drooping president (Miss MADGE ELLIOTT), its equally coy author and Chorus (Mr. CYRIL RITCHARD), and its dim historical queue—a Wolsey who has bidden a long farewell to all his greatness, a lisping Charles the Second,

and a broad Welsh Nelson rendered speechless by the roar of aircraft. (There Mr. COWARD shakes hands with any open-air audience during the war.) Better than this is Mr. RITCHARD's one-man conversation-piece as an Indian Army officer for whom life is a bristle of question-marks. The player has "a fair large front and eye sublime." When he wishes none can so surprisingly represent a genial basilk. But then he can also be a bouncing panther; he has a gift for finding the right attitude, and a readiness to point and speed the jest that must always

Miss GRENFELL also adorns a charming "Du Maurier" number (her own lyric to Mr. RICHARD ADDINSELL's music) in which the lady grieves that though she has "the face and the fringes" she has never appeared in *Punch*.

There are other likeable folk, especially Mr. CLIFF GORDON in his own Franco-British incident, and the singer Mr. GRAHAM PAYN in songs divided between the unremarkable and the excellent. Some will wish that—in one sense—the revue had been sketchier. We know that Mr. COWARD can shape and decorate a lyric to admiration, but where are the sketches he can write so sharply when he pleases?

"The Burchells of Battersea Rise" is a promising title. It turns out to be merely a song by four of the author's previous victims, members of "this happy breed." A *Blithe Spirit* ballet which precedes it—another COWARD comment on COWARD—is the evening's least inspiring passage, though it is undeniably well danced. J. C. T.

"LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (HAYMARKET)

Strangely, WILDE's alarms come off better in this revival than the flash-and-flourish of his college of witcrackers. Miss ISABEL JEANS has the proper sweep and—in the third act—the emotion for *Mrs. Erlynne*, and we shall not readily forget her last entrance. Thanks to this actress and to the vocal quality that lifts her lines—it is a sort of husky sparkle—WILDE's melodramatics keep an unexpected theatrical effect.

Miss DOROTHY HYSON, with a voice of tinkling crystal, is not strong enough for *Lady Windermere*; but Mr. GEOFFREY TOONE, as her husband, is always amply capable. This is a valiant performance.

Miss ATHENE SHYLER, a grand Duchess, leads the brisk rattle. The men, with the exception of Mr. DENYS BLAKELOCK who can project an epigram, are hardly so impressive. That clotted cleverness in *Darlington's* rooms (what are the WILDE wits saying?) must ever be slightly indigestible. Mr. GIELGUD's production and Mr. CECEL BEATON's ornate settings preserve "the blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry." J. C. T.



MIXED COMPANY

Countess of Fairfield	MISS MADGE ELLIOTT
Spirit of Masque	MR. CYRIL RITCHARD
Herself	MISS JOYCE GRENFELL

commend him to a revue producer. Miss ELLIOTT is ever good-humoured, whether as the noble pageanteer or as one of Mr. COWARD's Cockneys; but the other major personage of the revue is Miss JOYCE GRENFELL. Her ear for the shades of accent is as accurate as that of Shaw's Higgins, and she is devastating both in her own monologue as the too-sweet singer of Tulse Hill back from years of warbling "Ave Maria" to the troops abroad ("I do all Deanna Durbin's numbers"), and as the terrible schoolgirl of Mr. COWARD's song, who, quitting dumps so dull and heavy, obeys orders to sigh no more, lift up her heart, keep her chin up, and come smiling through.

The Lift

NEXT to the Pyramids and the heat one of the chief post-war recollections of officer visitors to Cairo will be of the lift at the Hotel Filoos. The first reaction of newcomers to the hotel is surprise to find that they are not, like most lifts in Egypt, "Out of Order."

Captain Sympson and I arrived the other day with a lot of luggage, most of which belonged to Driver Obongo, who appears to be gradually collecting furnishings for his post-war hut, and gets us to look after it for him.

"He'll be landing us with the parts of a prefabricated house next," said Sympson bitterly as we surveyed the packages. "Thank goodness the lift is working."

A sad-looking major with a Deferred Operationally Vital expression drew us aside.

"Don't use the lift," he said. "Take the advice of an old hand and get a bevy of porters to carry your stuff upstairs. A lieutenant of Royal Signals spent three hours yesterday getting from the fourth to the second floors, and that is by no means a record."

Then he hurried away to the bar without further explanation. We decided to ignore his warning, and instructed all the porters in sight to put our modest packages and Obongo's great possessions into the lift, which is an ancient affair built on the same lines as the carriages on the old Waterloo and City Railway, and with the same curious odour of horsehair and butterscotch. We scrambled in on top of the luggage and were about to press the button marked "9th Floor" when somebody on the fourth floor pressed the outside knob and we shot up to the fourth floor. A colonel got in, and immediately the lift shot upwards.

"But I wanted to go down," said the colonel indignantly.

Somebody had evidently pressed the button on the twelfth floor, because we shot past the ninth floor and came to a rest at the twelfth, where two nursing sisters, who wanted the restaurant on the tenth floor, joined our party.

Sympson made a quick jab at the tenth floor button, but somebody on the second floor was too quick for him, and we shot down to the second, where we parted with the colonel, who had decided to walk down the rest of the way. In his place we gained two Polish officers who said they knew how to work the lift. If it did not stop at

the floor you wanted, they said, you just had to open the door a little way opposite to the required aperture, and this cut off the current and all was well.

So we took the nursing sisters up to the tenth floor and a Polish officer hurriedly opened the door, with the result that we stuck between the ninth and tenth floors and lost down the shaft a long sausage-shaped object belonging to Obongo. After half an hour the manager came along with a mechanic, who managed to get us down to the ground floor, where we had started our pilgrimage. We emerged into the vestibule, to find Obongo standing there with a long coffin-like

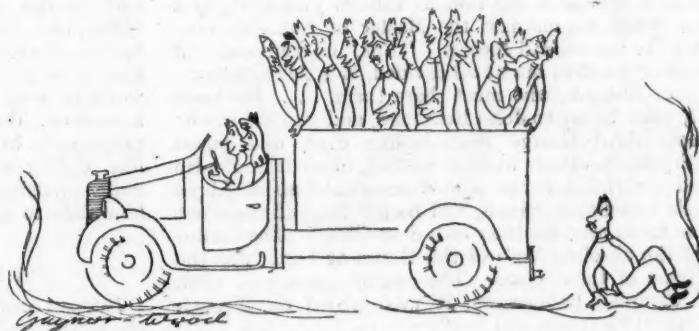
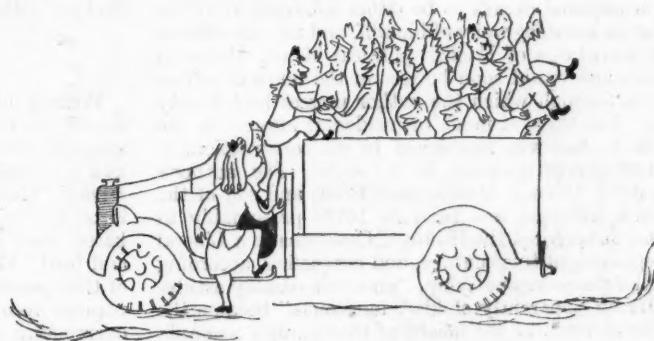
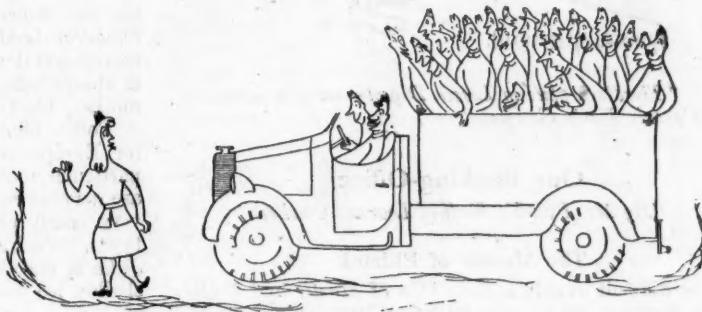
object which appeared to contain a grandfather clock.

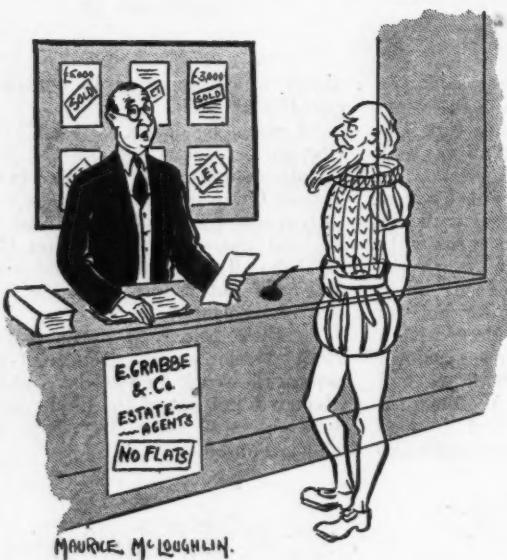
"I would be deeply grateful," said Obongo, "if you would put this with my other things. The Big Lord in the Transit Camp objects to surplus kit."

Sympson pushed Obongo into the lift and threw the object after him.

"Take all the stuff up to the ninth floor and put it into our room," he said malevolently.

Then we adjourned to the bar to await developments. We shall not require the truck for two days, and if Obongo is not out of the lift by then, Sympson will have to drive the vehicle himself.





"There's a place in Lesser Dipcot—but I'm afraid it's only Early Georgian."

Our Booking-Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Master of Elibank

IT is difficult to give a clear idea of *Master and Brother* (JOHN MURRAY, 16/-), Colonel ARTHUR MURRAY's account of his brother's career and recollections of his own life. It is too lacking in personal details to be either a biography of his brother or an autobiography of himself, and anyone with no previous knowledge of English political history thirty to forty years ago would soon be lost in the maze of names and events through which the author presses breathlessly onwards. But there is much of incidental interest in the book, which, however haphazard in its construction, is simple and straightforward in its style. The author's brother, Alick Murray, Master of Elibank, and son of the tenth Lord Elibank, was born in 1870—presumably in Scotland. He entered the House of Commons as a Liberal at the beginning of this century, and concealing, according to the Chief Conservative Whip, "an extraordinary astuteness under an apparently childish innocence" became the Chief Liberal Whip at the height of that party's triumph. "If 1909 was Lloyd George's year, 1910 was Asquith's," wrote J. A. Spender, the famous Liberal journalist, in a passage which summarizes the Master of Elibank's contribution to the Liberal success. "But," he continues, "if the honours of 1910 are at all divided, it is Alick Murray, Master of Elibank, who must share them. . . . He knew exactly what to say to John Redmond, and when to say it; he kept Lloyd George from boiling over, and raised Asquith's temperature when it seemed to be falling. He soothed the rich Liberals who were uneasy about Lloyd George's Limehouse speech, and he got large cheques out of them to be used for their own despoiling." The limitation of the absolute Veto of the House of Lords was the chief issue of these years. The conflict opened in 1906, under Campbell-Bannerman, it was carried on through two General Elections, and finally won on August 9th, 1911,

when the House of Lords, threatened with the creation of five hundred Liberal peers, at last gave way. Nowadays one tends to think of war as the most exacting of political occupations, but Colonel MURRAY tells us that by the time the Veto fight was won and the National Health Insurance Bill, the first great Socialist measure, passed, the Front Ministerial Bench, men in the prime of life, were all either grey or bald. The Master of Elibank himself, though only forty-two, was white-haired. His health broke down, and his work was virtually over. A few months before his death in 1920 he tried to effect a reconciliation between Lloyd George and Asquith, but it was beyond his power to close the rift in the once united team.

H. K.

On Leave

Mr. H. E. BATES' play *The Day of Glory* (JOSEPH, 6/-) is the work of a magician's apprentice who has called up more spirits than he can subdue. Technically it is an able exposition of three generations' war-weariness, compressed into twenty-four hours of stage time and one single arrangement of stage space. The lounge of the *Sandersons'* house in England and a summer's day and night of 1942 see the impact on the *Sanderson* family of two wars. *Squadron-Leader Jack Sanderson, D.F.C.*, arrives with his laurels and departs to his death, commented on—for action is almost wholly imported in dialogue—by his uncle, his mother, his pre-war fiancée, his new love and his sister. A Polish pilot-officer stands, conventionally but stoutly, for Europe and Christendom. The *Sandersons* have no particular roots, natural or supernatural. Their reactions are nervous rather than considered, and while the men are very nearly personalities, the women are little more than types. *Jack's Catherine* is selfishness incarnate. His *Julia* is unselfishness disincarnate. *Catherine* cuts all the shallow ice she is meant to cut. *Julia* as a spiritual sheet-anchor is unconvincing. Throughout the play the customary harrowing questions are pointedly posed, but it closes without the suggestion of an answer.

H. P. E.

Flight to Mars

Perhaps it is one of the inevitable results of the shattering discoveries revealed during the past few weeks that pseudo-scientific fiction seems just now, somehow, as out-of-place as a practical joke at a funeral. Mr. MICHAEL HARRISON's *Higher Things* (MACDONALD, 8/6) suffers in this way, which is of course its misfortune rather than its fault. It is based upon the discovery by a City clerk, "gently born and bred," like his Tennysonian prototype, but, unlike him, of that peculiarly obnoxious stamp aptly expressed by the popular term "twerp," that he possesses the power of overcoming the force of gravity. Apparently, however, the only uses to which he can put his unique gift are theft and murder and a rather pointless acquaintance with Hitler, and, having made this planet too hot to hold him, he departs via the stratosphere for another. This particular kind of satire is probably one of the most difficult in the world to bring off successfully, whether in the vein of pure adventure, like Jules Verne's novels, or politico-scientific propaganda like Mr. Wells's, or pure imaginative fantasy like *Gulliver's Travels*; and, though Mr. HARRISON writes amusingly, the book is a *tour de force* which somehow fails to get there.

C. F. S.

A Russian Mirror of Perfection

Russian faith holds that there is a bridge built by Christ the master-builder over the abyss of evil, and of this bridge

the saints are living stones. They keep the much-contested way open; and the life of St. Serafim of Sarov (1759-1833) shows how this is done. The extraordinary thing about *Flame in the Snow* (CONSTABLE, 10/-), which retells Serafim's story, is the mediæval manner of its acquisition and the mediæval quality of the life itself. It is in the best, the Franciscan, tradition. Kursk might be Assisi, the forest of Temniki the Umbrian countryside. Here in a lumber-camp hospital, ten years ago, Miss JULIA DE BEAUSOBRE recaptured the "folk" life of the saint who was canonized by the Orthodox Church in 1903. He was a child of craftsmen, pre-eminently church-builders, and his family life was a delightful prelude to holiness. He became a monk, and then a hermit in the forest, with a cat, a bear, and a wolf for company. Even these had to be given up for a bricked-up cell before he was fit to become a *starets* or director of souls. It is reassuring in these still darker days to realize how much simplicity, peace and love can be amassed and distributed to mankind by one Christian solitary.

H. P. E.

George S. Gordon

This biographical sketch, by M.C.G., of *George S. Gordon* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 10/6) forms an interesting supplement to his letters, which were published two years ago. Shrewd, patient and resolute, George Gordon was thorough and successful in everything he undertook. From Glasgow, where he was the most brilliant Greek scholar of his year, he went to Oxford, as a scholar of Oriel. Oxford depressed him at first. There was an absence of enthusiasm in the undergraduates, a well-bred apathy, which compared badly with the ardour and earnestness of the Glasgow students. But his combativeness was roused, and, as a friend put it, he tackled Oxford as he might have tackled a strange golf-course—"There was a bogey to beat; and George set about doing it." He took a double first, in Honour Mods, and Greats, became a Fellow of Magdalen, and at the age of thirty-two accepted the Chair of English Literature at Leeds, which he relinquished when war broke out. He was an excellent officer, distinguished himself on active service in France, was welcomed back to Leeds, and left it with regret in 1922, to succeed Walter Raleigh as Professor of English Literaturé in Oxford. In due course he became President of Magdalen, and his last years were passed as Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, from 1938 till shortly before his death in 1942, an anxious and difficult period which proved his possession of great administrative powers and exceptional judgment. His only disappointment was that he had written so little, but, so far as can be judged from this memoir, he possessed rather the scholar's than the writer's temperament.

H. K.

Willow the King

The bibliography of cricket swells visibly. Sir PELHAM WARNER has already written some thirteen books about the Great Game, and now his *Book of Cricket* (SPORTING HANDBOOKS LTD., 9/6) makes its appearance in a fourth edition, entirely reset, say the publishers, with every chapter revised and brought up to date. True, we notice that Mr. D. K. Carmody is spoken of as "now a prisoner of war" instead of as an active participant in recent matches at Lord's and elsewhere, but in these swift-moving times who can be absolutely accurate? Sir PELHAM is abundantly qualified to write with authority about cricket. An England player, captain of Test Match teams, and in recent years a selector, he is and has long been one of the foremost figures in the national game. His revised *Book of Cricket* will be studied eagerly by many enthusiasts. There is matter

in it for all tastes— instructive chapters on batting, bowling, and fielding, Some Thoughts on Captaincy, notes on famous players of old times, full accounts of many matches against Australia and South Africa, a very full chapter on "Some Cricketers of My Time," and, finally, an "Honours School" in which, with the assistance of an anonymous board of critics, the author selects a list of the best twenty-five batsmen, bowlers, fielders and all-rounders, with the best ten wicket-keepers, over the last fifty years.

L. W.

Portraits in Many Mirrors

Little Coquette (HEINEMANN, 9/6) is the story of a French girlhood between the years 1899 and 1914. It reads like an autobiography, and it is one in essence though not in fact. The author, Mrs. RÉNEE DE FONTARCE McCORMICK, remarks in her introductory note, "Simone d'Entremont is a little girl such as once I was. My life was like hers, and it was passed at a time and in circumstances such as I have here described." Her book is as light and frothy and airy as a bowl full of bubbles blown from the most exquisitely scented French soap. Reflected in the bubbles is a series of little portraits. There is father—"a charming person—weak but jovial—he had succeeded in retaining but few hairs on his head. They formed a distinguished little circlet or halo." There is the beautiful mother and Miss Hayes, the English governess—"a dear plump old spinster" who must have suffered horribly in her attempt to instil British ideas of decorum in her charge. There is Uncle Louis with his lovely ladies; and all the servants and relations who were part of the rich and aristocratic menage. The most charming portraits are those of Simone herself. We see her first as a stout-legged child of six. We follow her to Paris and the seaside, know her as an *enfant terrible*, shocking Miss Hayes by outspoken comments on the unmentionable, and (more pathetically) as a young girl, struggling for self-possession. We leave her, saying good-bye to her father on the eve of war, and we leave her very reluctantly.

B. E. B.



"The inventor of these things might have paused a moment to consider the people who have to empty them."



"I'd still buy it for you now, dear, if I had £4,500; just as I'd have bought it for you in 1938 if I'd then had £960."

The Galapagonian Scene

Pressing Problems

NOW that the struggle against aggression has been won, Dr. Alejandro Merida is having to direct his Presidential energies to matters nearer home. For over four months the industrial and economic machinery of Galapagonia has been fully geared for war, and the return to a peace-time footing presents a number of difficulties.

It should be remembered that during her months of industrial mobilization the country produced slightly more than four light tanks and almost half that number of transport vehicles,*

*The fact that these were constructed without shafts, owing to a misreading of the brown-print, in no way detracts from the high endeavour of the craftsmen.

while the construction of an ox-cart landing-craft in a camouflaged cave beyond Mount Bippo is probably well advanced. (News of the Allied victory is on its way to the weaving-party by *letta-boy*.) Production of nut-fibre scabbards, nut-plush medal cases and nut-shell whistles has also been going forward on the same huge scale.

This information is contained in the government's Brown Paper on Galapagonia's war effort, and it is heartening to note that in spite of the high rate of sleep in Galapagonia more than fifteen per centum of the population has always been at work at any given moment (except during the hours of

darkness) since the country threw in her entire weight on the side of the democracies. This is a notable achievement, and merits more than a passing consideration.

But the account for this industrial feat is now being presented. The common man of Galapagonia is a hard-headed fellow. His staple diet is nuts. Wrenched from his occupation of purely self-supporting and non-competitive nut-work, he felt, pardonably perhaps, that he had earned some additional reward, and the President's first plan of allocating to each *nutta* extra supplies of nuts to work on only pacified the people for a short time; when they discovered that

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the extra materials were no sooner fashioned into articles of military necessity than they were annexed by the state there was considerable discontent and unrest, and a party of students demonstrated outside the President's home.

The next official step was an astute one. Dr. Merida declared that in future no nut-worker should be separated from his own nut-work, and for some weeks this measure not only raised the morale of the workers but had the supplementary and important effect of directing them automatically into the fighting forces or the war-industries; after a man had completed the construction of, say, a nut-fibre sentry-box the article was at once seized for military purposes, but the maker was permitted to accompany it to its ordained location and stand in it. A secret clause in the declaration gave further powers to the government under which, once having signified a desire to stay with their products, *workers were not again allowed to leave them*, except on the strongest compassionate grounds, and such grounds were not held to be constituted by the later emergence of faults in the workmanship of the article concerned.

In this way not only was a powerful body of fighters and workers built up, but competent craftsmanship assured, for it soon became known that a man who manufactured, say, a water-bottle of unseasoned or poor quality nut-shell would probably take it as part of his equipment on posting to the arid wastes of the Blubola plain, where he would ultimately suffer considerably from the effects of unrelieved thirst.

For a time this plan produced admirable results; there was an early phase, it is true, in which the country's industrial resources became entirely concentrated on the manufacture of nut-fibre hammocks, but this was ended by a decree limiting the production of these articles to workers in the President's immediate family circle. But war-time legislation demands constant adjustment to constantly changing conditions, and it presently became evident from censorship intercepts* that Galapagonians were growing anxious for some more personal reward for their labours. Dr. Merida at first strove to meet this development by intensive propaganda; his aim was to persuade the people that the war was a war of survival, and that it was not a question of whether they should profit by application to their duties, but whether by neglecting them they

should lose their homes, their native land, their lives and even their self-respect.

The campaign was not a success. The people's confused conception of world affairs, the more gravely distorted by a widely-held idea that the Nazis were some sort of fruit, made them all but impervious to argument. Indeed, the endeavour almost ended in disaster, when an imported film of a Nuremberg rally was displayed to personnel of a large training-centre in the capital. Instead of filling the spectators with loathing and contempt for the Nazi regime the film fired their imaginations at once; compared with their own unspectacular existences the spectacle of the waving banners and goose-stepping legions prompted a delighted mimicry which soon reached to all parts, and a highly critical period ensued in which Fascist salutes were seen everywhere and the widespread weaving of nut-fibre swastikas threatened to disjoint the whole social, political and industrial structure.

The President was faced with two courses only. Either he must declare a separate peace with Germany and declare war upon the Allies, or he must ruthlessly stamp out the rapturous addiction to the externals of Nazism which was now sweeping Galapagonia from end to end. The first course was unthinkable, for the Allies already had the upper hand; as to the second, it would mean certain revolution unless the people could be adequately compensated for the enforced abandonment of their novel and exciting way of life. The answer was higher remuneration. There was no other way.

A Declaration was swiftly drafted announcing treble rates of pay for all, from the President downwards, conditional upon the instant cessation and destruction of all Nazi practices and emblems. Furthermore, the word "Nazi" was never to be spoken except with the contemptuous adjectival prefix "*Cronnibolino*."* For the time being the situation was saved. But none knew better than the President himself that to embark on such a course, albeit unavoidably, was to sow the seeds of economic collapse.

There were soon signs of instability in Galapagonian currency. The *goita*, which before the increased pay-rates would purchase ten bags of shelled nuts, rapidly declined in value. After a fortnight it would purchase only one bag of shelled nuts, after a month it took ten bags of *goitari* to buy a single nut of any kind, and a week later *goitari* were being used to make

roads. Some form of stabilization had to be found, and eventually a decree was issued dispensing with the nut-standard and fixing an internal exchange rate whereby one *goita* had the value of 500 *goitari*; at first this measure arrested the decline, until it was noticed that high officers and government officials claimed to be the possessors of all the *goitari* worth 500 *goitari* but alleged that the army and the workers were being paid in currency worth only one five-hundredth as much. There were angry demonstrations of students, and the word "NUTHAUS" was chalked on the President's door.

It was when matters had reached this stage that Victory in Europe was announced, and at the time of writing no further reports have reached this country about Galapagonian affairs. It is thought in Whitehall, however, that the imminent dislocation of the national structure which must result from the Republic's victory is likely to bring Dr. Merida's political life (to say the least) to an end. It is unfortunate that Japan's surrender has now dealt him a further blow, making it impracticable for him to reunify his people by a declaration of war against that country—for it seems certain that in different circumstances he would not have hesitated once more to throw in Galapagonia's full weight on the side of Freedom and Humanity.

As things are, it is difficult for him to see clearly which side his bread is buttered.

J. B. B.

Utopia

I
THE prophets prophesied a house
For me, my daughter and my
spouse,
Cheap but enduring, spick-and-span,
With all the comforts loved by man,
A spacious kitchen which, it seemed,
Some super-scientist had dreamed,
Besides a garden of our own,
Where lush tomatoes could be grown;
A housing expert was to vet it,
And oh! how much we longed to get it!

II
We have it now, though far from cheap,
A shanty on a rubble heap,
A kitchen several paces long
With all the gadgets going wrong,
Besides a garden of our own
Composed entirely of stone;
But, we are told, we mustn't grouse,
Myself, my daughter, or my spouse;
We have a roof above our heads,
And some day we may get some beds.

G. F. B.

* The President had placed his agents in exclusive control of the nut-telegraph.

* No equivalent in English.

Down at Heel

AND how long have you had this back?" asked the doctor.

"As long as I can remember," I replied. "I believe I was born with it."

"I mean the backache, man, not the back. How long have you had that?"

"Three or four years, off and on. Unfortunately it disappeared a few weeks ago, I'm glad to say—as soon as I'd arranged this appointment. Now, would you like to see it?" I began to take off my coat.

"Not for a moment. First I want to see your right foot."

I confess I was slightly taken aback by this request, but I loyally removed my shoe and sock.

"My g—** began the doctor—and then remembered himself. "What a foot! What an awful foot! Poor old chap! Let's have a look at the other one."

But that was rather better, and after a quick glance he returned to his rapt contemplation of the first one. I could feel the poor thing blushing.

"I've never seen one like it." He tried unsuccessfully to suppress a bark of laughter. "It's not merely that it's flat. I expected that of course. It's the proportion. Do you see?"

I stared hard at the wretched object,

* A small "g" to give him the benefit of the doubt.

but though I concentrated for all I was worth I had to come away without a clue.

"Well, take the heel. In the normal foot the heel is so long." He held his hands so far apart. "Now yours is so long." His hands were now almost touching.

"I've always thought I had quite decent-sized feet," I said with dignity.

"Ah! Undoubtedly. Very decent-sized. Large tens, I should say?" I nodded. "Yes. But where does their length come from?"

"They grew in beauty side by side," I began.

"Of course they did, old chap. It must have been quite a poem—an epic poem. But that's not what I mean. Now look at these metatarsals."

The metatarsals, I learned, are the bones that go forward from where the heel stops.

"I have never," he continued impressively, "seen metatarsals like these before. They are quite out of the common. I should say they are unique. Look at them!"

He drew his hands so far apart that he fooled me completely. I glanced instinctively to the far side of the spacious room, expecting to see my metatarsals brought hard up against the wainscot there. I was disappointed of course.

"That's why your feet are so long.

And with metatarsals like these you could hardly be other than flat-footed. Now, remember, you stand at your work. That may easily be the cause of all your trouble. Your posture is hopelessly wrong. You must get a cobbler to build your heels up underneath so as to throw you forward."

"Ah!" I said. I have always longed to stand six feet three. "Can I go up half an inch?"

"Let's try."

But after exhaustive experiment he could only allow me three-eighths; so I shall have to stand six two and seven-eighths as long as I can.

At last he allowed me to cover my despised extremities once more. Then he looked down at them.

"What's that near your right foot?" he asked.

"That's my left foot," I replied in some surprise.

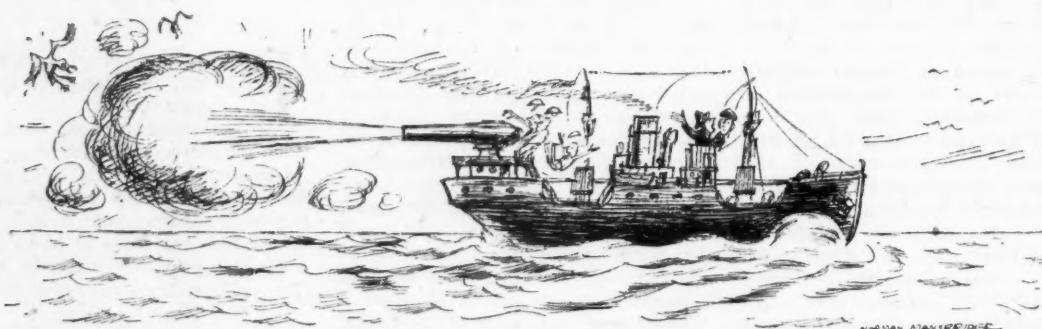
"No, no—the other side."

It was a fiver that had slipped out of my shoe by accident; it is a habit of mine to keep one or two tucked in for safety whenever I go up to London.

"I'll take that," he said. "And have you five shillings?"

"You'll see my back first," I said coldly. "I haven't driven it a hundred and twenty miles and wasted over three gallons of petrol on it for nothing."

I began once more to remove my coat.



"It's practice for the gun crew, and it gives us an extra couple of knots."

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BECAUSE IT'S
STILL THE BEST

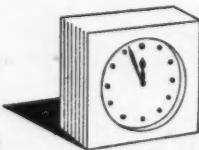


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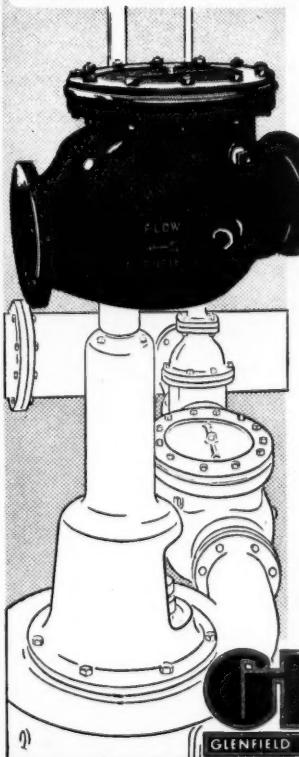
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